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A
L E T T E R
T O A
L A D Y,
Concerning the
E D U C A T I O N
O F
F E M A L E Y O U T H.



L O N D O N :

Printed for CHARLES BATHURST, at the *Cross-Keys*, over-against St. Dunstan's Church,
Fleetstreet.
MDCCXLIX.

AC911.1747.L465

A
L E T T E R

TO A

L A D Y, &c.

M A D A M,

THOUGH I am very sensible, how little qualified I am to commence Author; and have moreover (as you well know) a particular Aversion to Writing—Yet, in Obedience to your Commands, I for once shall prevail with myself, to set Pen to Paper, to communicate my Thoughts freely to you, upon a Subject you own the Importance of; though, at the same Time, you confess, it is a Subject but little thought of, and less regarded.

You have more than once, I well remember, expressed your Surprize, at the seeming Severity, with which I generally treat your Sex, whenever they happen to be the Subject of Conversation; and as you could never make out, that I have received any particular ill Usage from them, that should occasion me to make (what you are pleased to call) such barbarous Reprisals; you are at a Loss to account for such a Conduct, in a Person, you should not otherwise suspect to be of a sour or ill-natured Disposition.

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To

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To take off the ill Impressions, which this general Way of Railery and Banter, has made upon your Mind ; I have been obliged sometimes, particularly in a late Conversation at *A—*, where I last had the Pleasure of your Company, to mix a little *Panegyrick* with my *Satyr* ; and have allowed a just Proportion of *Praise*, to those of your Sex, who, in my Opinion, had any Title or Claim to it ; but this has not satisfied you.— You have always thought, I was rather too sneaking of my Commendations, and that even my good Word, carried a Sort of tacit Disapprobation with it.— I dwelt too much in Particulars ; and you have often observed, that an intire Character was too much to be commended at one Time.— You allowed, you said, you have often heard me talk in Raptures of

*Almeria's Wit, Belinda's sparkling Eyes,
Chloe's fair Form, and Celia's Charms divine*

But then, as these were but single Qualities, and had but a small Share in the Composition of what we call a Character ; my Praises always left a Kind of Suspicion behind them, that there was something concealed, which (notwithstanding the Homage I paid to these Accomplishments) was not intirely to my Good-liking ; so that, it was hard to say, whether my Commendations were not as spiteful (so you were pleased to phrase it) as my Reproaches ; and that, for your Part, were it left to your Choice, you should be as well pleased with being the Object of my *Satyr*, as my *Panegyrick*.

Being so closely pursued, I was obliged to confess, that the Opinion I had of the present Race of Females, was indeed none of the best ; that I had read a great Variety of Descriptions of them ; some, I owned, mortifying enough ; and others of no less

extra-

extravagant Encomium; that I had compared these several Draughts and Copies with the Originals, and had often found that the Lights and Shades, in both Instances, had been too much heightened; but for the most Part, those Representations which described them as fickle and inconstant, fond of Revenge and Power, of strong Passions and weak Understandings, had best answered to the Generality of those, that Fortune had thrown in the Way of my Observation. I with Pleasure reflected on some Exceptions I could make; but these were so few, that I thought the general Rule was in no Danger of being overthrown by the Instances, that could be alledged to the Contrary, were they much more frequent, than, I am afraid, they will be found to be.

Here I found you took Fire, and the conscious Blood ascended the Face, the Seat of Majesty; and though the whole Manner of my Speech and Behaviour plainly pointed out, that I esteemed you, as an Instance I should always except from the general Censure, I was then passing; yet, (whether you did not think me in Earnest, or else was so thoroughly exasperated at the Indignity, you apprehended was offered to your Sex, I cannot certainly determine; but be it which you will) you soon let me know, that the Offence I had given was very heinous; and had my Resentment kept equal Pace, I do not know what might have been the Consequence, or in what Temper we should have parted;—but, as nothing, at any Time, can give me a more sensible Concern, than in any wife (though innocently) to interrupt that good Humour, which is to me the Life of all Conversation; to make some Amends for the Rudeness of this Attack I had made upon the Females (who, by the Way, had sufficient Reparation made them, by the gallant

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gallant Gentlemen than present, who defended their Cause with uncommon Warmth, and honoured them with the tender *Epithets* of, *Dear, Charming, enchanting* Creatures,—the *Masterpieces* of Nature,—little less than Angels, sometimes more, &c.) However, I say, to make some Amends for this Attack ; I apologized by saying,—That though I could not, notwithstanding all the Eloquence that had been expended in their Cause, intirely renounce the Opinion I had asserted ; yet so far I would agree with the worthy Gentlemen (whose Zeal upon this Occasion I greatly commended) that Nature designed them, for far more *innocent* and *agreeable* Creatures, than what, I had some Reason to think, they were often found to be upon Trial : I could not but think indeed, that Nature itself had, in some Measure formed them originally, with a large Proportion of Pride, of quick Resentment, of unsettled and variable Tempers, and a fond Attachment to Trifles, Gaities, and Toys ; but yet in the present State of the World, they were much worse, than when they came out of Nature's Hands, and their original Weaknesses vastly improved ;—nay, I went so far as to assert, that even yet, were proper Care taken, the Sex, notwithstanding their Foibles, might be made not only most agreeable, but useful ; and that ever if they should be brought to this, I myself would appear among the *first*, to do them Honour.

I well remember, you was the first who called upon me to explain myself ; and by the Way, told me with a Sneer, that though I had been pleased to affirm that your Sex were worse, than Nature made them ; yet I had given such a horrible Description of their *natural State*, that you thought, you might safely defy me, to give a more severe one.—

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In Answer to this, I told you, I had a high Regard for the Sex, notwithstanding all their Weaknesses,—that I still looked upon them, as designed to cheer and soften Life ; to smoothe the too often rugged Tempers of the other Sex ;— to kindle soft Desire, and diffuse Complacency and good Humour ;— and that their pretty, trifling, and gay Behaviour, were a proper Counterpoise to the Gravity, Sullenness, and Austerity, which would otherwise too frequently appear among those of the Male Kind ;— and that therefore it was not the Sex, but only the fantastick and unnatural Dress in which they appeared, that was the Object of my Censure ; in short, that I had no Quarrel with them for being Women (though you have often said that was sufficient Ground at any Time for my Disapprobation) but for being spoiled Women.—

As this did not entirely satisfy you, I took the Freedom to tell you, that would you please to recollect the various Instances, wherein your Sex stood condemned in my Opinion, you would soon see, that they might be all finally resolved, either into the Want of Education, or a bad one ; and that it was not Stature, I so freely found Fault with, but the Superstructure, which was raised upon it. The Foundation, upon the whole, was Good ; but the Building, too often, strangely disproportioned and irregular.

This, you may recollect, produced a long Debate upon the modern Way of educating young Ladies, in which each delivered their Sentiments according to their *different Tastes*, with great Frankness and Candour ; and notwithstanding the *Jars*, which first gave Rise to it ; we declared ourselves well satisfied at last, and parted in a very *good Humour*.—But as I happened to advance some Things, which you thought very much out of the common

mon Way, and which you apprehended wanted a little better Proof, than what I had then *bestowed* on them, you were pleased to insist upon it, that, as it might be a considerable Time before we should have the Opportunity of discussing the Affair ourselves, I should endeavour by Letter to clear up those Points, and at the same Time give you a more comprehensive *Idea* of the Subject.—

I know very well, there are many Treatises upon this Head, both in our own, and your favourite Language the *French*; but as I never read any of them, I shall not begin now; but send you only what is the Result of my own Observation, without being beholden to others. I would only desire you would take Notice, once for all,—that the following Reflections are calculated neither for the *High*, nor the *Low*, but for those, who are generally accounted in the *middle Condition* of Life: These, I always looked upon as the most important Part of the Community;—among these I have been chiefly conversant, and therefore the better able to point out those Errors in their Education, which have given Rise to the *greatest* and most *durable* Evils; and introduced such frightful Calamities in Families, as People are very averse to believe owing to this Cause, though manifestly to be traced up to it.

It is obvious that Persons of different Stations and Conditions, require a different *Method* of Treatment, nor can there be any one Plan laid down, which shall *equally* serve all; leaving those therefore of more exalted Birth and Quality, to the Direction of better Capacities; I dedicate this short Essay to the Service of the Fair of humble Rank and Fortune; and chiefly to give Notice to those, who have the bringing of them up, of the Rocks and Shelves, upon which such Numbers have struck,
and

and been cast away ; and forgive, *ye dear Creatures*, the Roughness and Severity, with which, I foresee, ye may imagine I have executed this Design, — *Assure* yourselves, it is wholly intended for your Good ; and let the honest Intention of the Writer make an Atonement for the Manner of his Writing.

The present Methods of bringing up the Fair, of the *Rank* and *Station* before-mentioned, may, I think, be reduced to two ; and one of them is so seldom *fallen in* with, that were it not for you, and a *few* others, who seem highly pleased with it, it would be scarce worth While to take any Notice of it.

The first and most general Way, you will allow the following Paragraphs, Madam, to present you with a short Representation of ; though they may contain some few Particulars, which may not perhaps pass so easily with you ; but as they are founded upon Fact, I shall not suppress them, notwithstanding they may happen to displease some. To proceed therefore ;

As soon as Miss is arrived at that Age, wherein *maternal Fondness* is tolerably satiated, and the tender Parents can bear the Thoughts of parting with her out of their Sight, she is generally dispatched to some *neighbouring* Town, and intrusted to the Care of some *sage* Matron, who has publickly taken upon herself the *Charge* of educating *female Youth*. — The Reasons of which, I suppose, are, that having her at Home, or at School in the Town of her Parents Abode would be a sure Way to have the Girl spoiled by too much Indulgence ; — and *Secondly*, sending her Abroad will be a Means of bringing her acquainted with the World, will conquer all those *sheepish* Airs, which are the natural Consequences of a *home Education* ; and give her a

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proper *Assurance*, when she appears before her Betters.

As soon as she has made her Entrance into this Station,—to divert that *Grief*, which a young and tender Mind must feel, at being divorced from the Society of kind and indulgent Parents, and brought to a Place she is intirely unacquainted with ; she is introduced by her *grave Guardian*, to a *Set* of young Ladies, of nearly equal Years, many of whom, she is told, have left their Mamma's at a far greater (at least as great a) Distance ; and yet appear with all the Gaiety and Unconcernedness imaginable ; and is informed, that it is quite a Shame, that she should not be as gay and unconcerned, as her Companions.—Miss seems dull at first, but it is not long before she begins to relish her Company, and gradually loses her Concern for Home.—She is then put to perform the Exercises of the Place ;— if she has not perfected herself in *Reading* and *Writing*, here are *Masters* ready to attend her ; at the same Time she is taught the Use of the Needle, and learns to work a *Sampler*, &c. but, that her Hands may not be too much imployed, a due Proportion of *Learning* is bestowed upon her *Heels*, and she learns to *dance* ; Variety, we know by Experience, is always delightful, and that the pretty Dear may not be stupified by *pausing* too much at one Thing, and so lose that ready *Wit* and *Vivacity*, she has hitherto discovered ; just to *diversify* her Employments, and pass a leisure Hour now and then, she is put under the Care of a *Music Master*, to learn to play on the *Harpsichord* or *Spinnet*, and (if she has any Thing of a Voice) to sing.—Amidst these *important* Affairs, the young Lady's Hours are divided on the *Week* Days.—On *Sunday*, according to Custom, she goes to *Church*, and is as good as her Neighbours ; so that I think learning to *write, read, sew,*
dance,

dance, sing, and play on some musical Instrument, comprizes the whole of what is intended by modern *Boarding-school* Education, unless you will take the Art of *Cookery* into the Account ; which, as it is undoubtedly too dirty Work for a young Lady to fully her Fingers with ; so, I think it is either generally neglected, and left out of this Part of Education, or is reserved to be taught her by her *Mamma* at Home.—In these elegant Labours and Amusements, *Miss* finds Employ, until she is grown so *big* a Girl, that it is high Time she should quit her hanging-sleeve Coat ; she is then sent for Home ; *Mamma* is surprized to see how much she is improved in Stature, and what *woman-like* Airs she assumes.—The *Mantua-maker* is sent for in all Haste, a Gown soon finished,—and she, the very Moment it is drawn over her, drops her Character of *pretty Miss*, and becomes a *fine Woman* in an Instant.

Allowing, you will say, all this for Truth, where is the great Harm, or indeed Impropriety of it ? I will freely grant, Madam, that what I have here described, are, not only in themselves, *harmless* and *innocent*, but *elegant Amusements*, and *gentle Accomplishments* ; and may frequently serve for the Entertainment of a young Lady's leisure Hours, without any Imputation on either her *Virtue* or *good Sense* ;—nay even *Dancing* itself (though I am the least Friend to that, of any of them, upon Account of the many ill Consequences that often attend it) may be proper to give the *fair Pupil* a just Degree of Assurance, and that *free, easy,* and *disengaged Air*, which is the *Top* of Female Politeness.—I am as much an Enemy to *Rusticity* and *Rudeness* in the softer Sex, as I am an Admirer of *Frankness* and *Sincerity* in my own ; and therefore am not against young Ladies being instructed in these Matters ; Why then find Fault, you will say ?

Have but Patience; *Madam*, and you shall soon be informed, it is not the *Things themselves*, but the *inordinate Value* that is set upon them, that gives me Offence; were they only rated according to their real Worth, and the Consequence they are of in Life, you had never heard a Word from me upon the Subject.—I would allow them their proper Share of Merit; but when they are accounted by the *young Creatures* themselves, and oftentimes by *those*, whose Years and Experience, one should have thought, would have taught them better, as the most *important* Qualifications they can be Mistresses of; I must beg leave to enter my Protest, and cannot help thinking, that there are other Things more nearly related to human Happiness, which ought to be regarded before them; but of some of these hereafter, when I come to inform you, in what Manner, I would humbly propose, the Fair should be educated.—

But the Case would not be so bad still, were these the *only* Accomplishments, they attain to in these Houses of Education; tho' it is *bad* enough in Conscience, considering the *wrong Taste* in Life, which the high Regard that is paid to them, must necessarily lay the Foundation of; but it would not be so bad, as it *really* is, were this all: I know you will readily answer, this is *all* that is *intended*;—Perhaps so!—but can you sincerely say, *Madam*, that this is all that is *learnt*? I know you cannot, and as I know too, it would give you too much Pain to recite this *All*, I refer to yourself: Give me leave to save you the Trouble, by enumerating some *few* (very *few* indeed) of those *many other* elegant Accomplishments, the young unexperienced Fair becomes here possessed of: And,

First, To keep the Minutes from hanging heavy upon her Hands, she soon learns to play at
Cards,

Cards, and contracts such a Love of Gaming, as may *probably* stick by her as long as she lives.

Secondly, She is here likewise initiated in all the *Romantic Sciences*; reads *Novels, Adventures, Plays*, and a thousand other Pieces of *Gallantry*;—being an *apt* Scholar, her Head is soon filled with Love and Intreague, and all her Thoughts taken up with Scenes of *Pleasure and Dalliance*; young as she is, she meets with Accounts of others, in the *Books* she now studies, who not having seen more *Suns* than herself, have made a considerable *Figure* in Adventures of this Kind;—from this Time forward, nothing takes up her Attention, but what has a Relation to our Sex; the Spinet, nay, the very Needle becomes an Instrument of Love, and she would throw both aside, did she not expect, that they would be, some Way or other, subservient to the *Conquests* she is meditating:—With all this *Mischief* in her Head, she is now perhaps put under the Care of a Master of the Ceremonies, to learn *Motion and Behaviour*; being introduced into this new Scene, she begins to exert herself with no small Vigour and Application; here, it is probable, she is first shewn to, and begins her Acquaintance with our Sex, and practises those Lessons upon them, she has got ready by Heart, long ago.—She here learns the Meaning of *Looks and Sighs*, and knows how to keep up a Conversation, without opening a Lip; but tired at last with this *dumb* Scene, she burns with Impatience to come to a *nearer* Explanation, and in Order to it, tries all Ways she can think of, to distinguish herself. In Consequence of this,

Thirdly, She learns the Art of Dress to Perfection, and with that, gets such an *unconquerable* Passion for Finery, that she is never at Ease, whilst she sees any one, not much her Superior in Point
of

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of Fortune, dressed in a richer or gayer Suit than herself.—And as she never can enjoy better Opportunities of gratifying her own *Vanity*, displaying her *Arts*, making *Conquests*, and gaining *Applause*: Hence,

Fourthly, Her extravagant Fondness for *Balls*, *Assemblies*, and *Plays*, which, for the most Part, being frequented only by Coxcombs, she is in no great Danger of missing the Prize she aims at: I suppose, Madam, you will readily excuse my going on any farther, in the Enumeration of these *additional* Excellencies and Qualifications; and therefore, taking up with what we have already described, if our young Lady should be so fortunate, as to escape being made the Prey of some *Coxcomb* Apprentice or more *audacious* Footman (which you know is often the Case;) we will attend her Home, and see what Figure she makes with all these *Improvements*, which are as follows.

She is able to *read*, *write*, *sing*, *play* on Music, *dance*, work a *Sampler*,—play at *Cards* to Admiration, has a Head laden with *Gallantry*, *Love*, *Intreagues*, *Adventures*, &c. has a vehement Passion for *Admiration* and *fine Cloaths*, and an extravagant Opinion of her own *Wit*, *Beauty*, and *Merit*, which she continually longs to set off to the *best* Advantage, by frequenting *Balls*, *Assemblies*, and Places of *public Resort*.—

Mamma receives this *dear* Creature with Raptures, and is so highly satisfied with her Accomplishments, that she soon grows as fond of shewing *Miss*, as *Miss* is of being shewn.—The Girl must have something handsome to appear in.—Here *Mother's* and *Daughter's* Vanity conspire, and *fine Suits*, *Lace*, *Linnen*, *Toys*, and *Trinkets*, and the almost endless *Apparatus* of female Ornament, is the Consequence.

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To display these and the *divine Charms* of the *adorable Creature* they adorn, nothing now goes forward, but *Entertainments, Visits, &c.* The *Assembly Rooms* (those *Temples* sacred to Female Vanity) are never opened without being honoured with her Presence.—The *Card-Tables* and *Tee-Tables* are favoured likewise with a *proportionable* Share of Respect; here she enjoys at large (what had long been the Object of her Wishes) the Opportunity of displaying her *Cloaths* and her *Person*, with all the Address she imagines herself Mistress of; and a Day scarce passes without beholding her in all this *Trim* of Pride and Vanity.—Crowds of *Suitors* present themselves at her Feet.—*Vows, Sighs, Oaths, and Protestations*, she dissolves in Raptures at this agreeable Scene, but determines not to forego the Pleasure of it *all at once*; she therefore assumes the Air of a *haughty Beauty*, and treats, with *affected* Cruelty and Scorn, all who *dare* to address her;—till at last, being unable to withstand any longer; and *Nature*, moreover, being backed by *paternal* Authority, she falls *blooming* with *Virgin Charms*, to the Lot of some *happy and successful Lover*; while the *Rest* who burn, with equal Passion, are ready to die with Grief at their Disappointment.

After having attended the youthful Fair, thus far on her Way through Life, and lodged her safe in the Arms of some inraptured Swain; it may not be amiss to accompany her a little further, to see the Effects of this elegant Education.

From what I have related, I could almost imagine, there is no Occasion for the Gift of Prophecy, to foretel what will come after.—We now see her in a new Relation, and must consider her as a *Wife, Mother, and Mistress* of a Family; you, *Madam*, who are so good a Judge of what belongs to this *State*; and who (without Flattery) are a Pat-

tern of Behaviour in it, will very readily guess at the Part our polite Lady will act here. For tho' the *Effects* of her Conduct may turn out different, according to the Hands she has the Fortune to fall into ; and a wise Man, whom Nature has favoured with a proper Share of *Courage* and *Resolution*, may, perhaps, by prudent *Management* and *well-timed Restraints*, sometimes prevent the impending Evils, which would naturally flow from her approved Manner of Life ; yet, as this seldom happens, and supposing it should, the Woman still remains inflexibly the *same* : I fancy the Case of *Flavia* may serve as a Sample of the Fate that generally attends the Ladies, who have had the Happiness of the liberal Education, I have been before describing.—

Poor *Flavia* ! You knew her, *Madam*, and remember her the Toast of this *Town* ; envied by her own Sex, adored by ours ; *Flavia* had been brought up in the Way abovementioned ; was a Girl of *Wit* and *Spirit*, and a competent Share of *Beauty* : Good Endowments ; but alas ! *Flavia* knew too well that she had them, and was extremely solicitous to let others know so too ; she *danced*, *sung*, and *touched* the Spinet, to Admiration ; and was extravagantly fond of *Balls*, *Plays*, *Visiting*, and *Entertainments* ; where she was sure to hear herself sufficiently commended, and behold *Crowds* of sighing Swains, expiring at her Feet.—*Flavia* had about fifteen-hundred Pounds to her Fortune.—With so much Merit, and such a Dower, she made terrible Havock among the Youth ; but at last, was prevailed on to resign her Charms, to the Possession of *Polydore*, a gay young *Tradesman* of this Place.—As soon as the happy Pair was wed, *Polydore* led Home his Bride, and gave her Possession of his House, where, she is now to be considered

as *Mistress*.—Nothing is heard from this Time but *Gaiety* and *Mirth*—*Music*, *Balls*, and *Entertainments*;—after a While, she begins to quarrel with the *Furniture*, it was poor *old-fashioned Stuff*, not becoming her Fortune or Education.—She happens to be *breeding*,—a *Son* and *Heir* must not be lost,—the Upholsterer is sent for, and Things settled to her Mind : The Rooms being now fitted up to receive Company, in such a Manner as should be no Disgrace to her, she begins to cultivate an Acquaintance in the Neighbourhood, and scarce a Day passes, but she either receives or pays Visits ; she moreover keeps an elegant Table, dresses prodigiously gay, and though she happens to be a good Breeder, it would break in too much upon her Pleasures, to have a Parcel of *squawling Brats* about her, and therefore you shall not find a single Child at Home, to interrupt her ;—she frequents *public* Companies, keeps *late* Hours, and never *boggles* at *Expences* ; takes no Care of her Family Affairs, has all her Work done by the *Hire* ; and if ever she seizes a Needle, it is only to work a Border for a Cap or a Handkerchief.—*Shirts* and *Shifts*, and *Household Linnen*, it was too low an Employment, and what she had not been brought up to.

It would be tedious to follow our fine Lady, through a seven Years Round of such *important* Business. Therefore, to shorten my Story, before the eighth Year expired, poor *Polydore* was obliged to break ; his Composition did not amount to above five Shillings in the Pound : Nothing was left for the Family to subsist on ; *Flavia* quits the Town, and goes to *L.—*, where she plies about the Playhouse for a Livelihood, and now obtains *that* there, which puts a *frightful* End to all her Miseries.—The Children are left to the Charity of well-disposed People ; and *Polydore* strolls up and

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down

down the Country like a Vagabond, and has scarce a Place, where to lay his Head.

This is a *melancholy* Story, 'tis true, *Madam*, but the Event is nothing but what might easily have been foretold, from the bare Hearing of *Flavia's* Manner of Education : and when I look abroad into the World, I can readily shew you Numbers of Families in, or upon the Borders of, *Ruin* and *Distress* ; and *all owing* to the same Cause : And were it not for the happy *Dulness* or *Deformity* of some Girls, or more *happy* Dispositions of others, 'twould be more frequently the Case, than what we find it is—however, no Thanks to our modern Education that it is not always so.

I know, *Madam*, that you yourself have as frightful Notions of these Vanities and Follies, the female Youth are indulged in, as I can possibly have, and will readily admit the ill Consequences I have here charged them with : You are no more a Friend to this *fashionable Extravagance*, than myself, and though you think with me, that those *little Accomplishments*, in which the whole of our modern Education *centers*, may have their Use, and that the *best Parts* and most *amiable Dispositions* would make but an *awkward* and *uncomely* Appearance without their Assistance ; yet you are far from setting that Value upon them, which most others do : And therefore, though you would have your *Daughters* so far made acquainted with these lesser Arts, as to give them a becoming *Air in Company*, and preserve them from being laughed at, for their *Rusticity* and *home Education* ; yet you agree with me in this,—that this is a Part of Learning the least *important* of any a young Lady should be instructed in,—these little Arts of *Dress*, *Motion*, *Music*, and Handling the *Needle* ; meer mechanical Exercises, that belong almost wholly to the

the Body, make nothing like the Figure in your Eyes, as the Improvement of the *better Part*, the *Mind*.—'Tis the Culture of *this*, that constitutes the *Business* of Life ; the *rational*, the *immortal* Part, challenges the first and highest Regards ; and as you know I am no *Free-thinker*, and therefore could not doubt, but I would allow that *Women* have *Souls*, I remember in the Conversation before referred to, when something of this Kind was started, you appealed to me with an Air of something like *Triumph* and *Satisfaction*, whether these were not my own Sentiments ? And that, however you might differ from me in some Things, you were pleased to think you had the Honour, in *this at least*, to be of the same Opinion ; and, without staying for my Answer, proceeded to give your Notions of the Matter, to which I listened with more than ordinary *Attention*.—The Time did not permit me to explain myself then ; and as I happen'd to say, that I really thought the Culture of the Mind *the thing* that ought principally to be regarded, you went away entirely satisfied, that we fully accorded in this *weighty* Point : And I make no Question but my Name has been oft introduced since, to give Countenance to the Opinions you were pleased *then* to advance : But as it is no unusual Matter for very different Meanings to lie concealed under the same general Terms, and the very same Words, when spoken by one, may, when made use of by another, have a Sense widely different—so it happens in this Case.

'Tis true, *Madam*, I have the Honour to agree with you in *Sounds*, and do maintain with you, and always shall maintain, that the *Culture* and *Improvement* of a *young Lady's Mind* should be the first thing regarded in her Education ; but am greatly afraid, when I come to explain myself, and

tell you what that Culture and Improvement is, we shall not be so well agreed as you imagine, and I could wish : I readily call to mind, with what Eloquence you explained yourself, and enlarged upon this Subject ; and as I presume, from what I then heard, that I am not a Stranger to what you intend by the *Improvement* of a *female Mind* ; I shall here set down what I take to be *your* Sentiments of this Affair, with a few Remarks, and conclude this long Epistle (of which, I suppose, you'll be heartily tired, by that Time you have gone through it) with giving you my *own*, as briefly as I can ; that by comparing what I shall there propose, with this *favourite Method* of *your's*, and the *fashionable one* I have just treated on, you may be able to form your Judgment, without farther Trouble.

What your Sentiments are of that *Culture* of a *female Mind*, which is requisite to the well Accomplishment of a young Lady, as near as I can guess, you will find in what follows.

You would (if I mistake not) at the same time that she applies herself to the learning those *lesser Arts*, we have mentioned above, have her *likewise* brought up to Reading, and the Sciences ; and instructed in the *French* at least, if not in the *learned Languages* : As soon as you thought her capable, you would give her a Taste of *Algebra*, and the *Mathematics*, nor should *Logic*, *Rhetoric*, *Metaphysics*, *natural* and *moral Philosophy*, or *Divinity*, be neglected.—For your own Part, you say, you can see no Reason why *Learning* should be confined to our Sex, and the Women who (in your Opinion) would equally become it, be entirely debarred from it : You can't help thinking, that this is a very *iniquitous Custom*, and that, were the Ladies permitted to make the best of their Talents this Way, they

they would soon appear in another Light than they do at present ; nor would there then be any just Foundation for that *Banter* and *Ridicule* they are now so frequently exposed to among Gentlemen of *Wit* and *Learning*.—They would then be no longer treated like *Idiots* and *Children*, *Beings* only proper for *Dalliance* and *Amusement* ; but looked upon as *rational Creatures*, and better used than in that *low Way* (so you called it) they are at present : 'Twould then be no uncommon Thing to see a *grave Professor* holding a formal Conversation with a *Philosopher* in *Petticoats* ; or a *deep Divine* learnedly disputing with a *female Saint*, upon the most *important* and *sublime* Doctrines of *Theology* : *Pert Coxcombs* and *shallow Fops* would soon be brought to know their Distance, and would not dare to make their Jests upon the *Sex*, as is the common Practice now-a-days, with every *Witling*.—You allowed that, there was at present but too much Reason for what I had said ; but would the *Ladies* apply themselves more to *Learning* (that is, as I take it, what you mean by the *Improvement of their Mind*) and mind *Visits*, *Dress*, and *public Entertainments* less, we should in a little Time see another Face of Things.—I remember you could not help dwelling with Rapture upon this enchanting Scene ; and your Imagination was so thoroughly warm, in contemplating the Honour, which such a State of Affairs would bring to your Sex, that I can scarce find in my Heart, even at this Distance of Time, to disturb you in the Possession of those *bright Ideas*, you take so much Pleasure in : But as I have learnt long since to subscribe to no Opinions but those I see the *Reasonableness* of ; and declare myself of no *Party*, but that of *Truth* and *Mankind* ; being called upon by you to deliver my Sentiments upon this *nice Subject*, I shall do it
with

with my wonted *Frankness* and *Sincerity* : Though at the same time I am not insensible, that to acquit myself in this Manner, I must necessarily be obliged to attack some Notions, for which you seem to have no common Degree of *Veneration* and *Regard* : You will not therefore be offended (as you are no Enemy to Plain-dealing) if I ask you, What Purpose will all this grand *Apparatus* serve ? Will a Lady's Skill in *Algebra*, or the *Mathematics*, make her ever the better *Mistress*, *Friend*, *Wife*, or *Mother* ? Or tell me what Advantage it will be to a Husband, should the dear Partner of his Joys and Cares be well acquainted with what is doing in the *upper* Regions, and able readily to inform you of the *Figure*, *Distance*, *Magnitude*, and *periodical Times* of the heavenly Bodies, and whilst she is so taken up with what is *over* her Head, be ignorant of what her Servants are doing *below Stairs* ? Where will be the Profit of her profound Skill in Languages, if she proves a Novice in the Affairs of a Family ? What signifies her amazing Understanding in *theological Mysteries*, if the Science of *Æconomy* should prove a real *Mystery* to her ? Or what End will her Insight into the *Grounds* and *Foundation* of *Morality* answer, comparable to a thorough Knowledge upon what *Ground* and *Footing*, *she* and her *Family* stand in the World, that she may regulate her Expenses accordingly ?

I know you will be ready to answer, that there is no Inconsistency between any of these things, and that, notwithstanding a Woman's Learning, she may acquit herself well of the Duties of her Station ; nay, it is a kind of Security for her doing so, as the Knowledge of our Duty must be previous to our Practice of it.—I allow that this looks plausible ; but there is no Disputing against Facts ;
and

and Experience has so fully convinced me of the ill Effects of this same *Learning* in *your* Sex, that were it not for *you, Madam*, and perhaps one or two more at most, that I could name (who, I am proud to say it, are Exceptions) I should almost absolutely pronounce it impossible, for *Prudence* and *Learning* to be ever joined together in a female Mind.—As far as ever I could understand your Sex (I own the most difficult Part of Learning I ever attempted) I have always observed, that your *Pride* is generally above a Match for your *Understandings*: For this Reason you shall scarce ever meet with a Woman who has made any Progress in Reading, but she shall betray an earnest Desire that you should be informed of it, and burns with as much Impatience to shew it, as a gay young Lady to display a new Suit upon an *Assembly-Night*.—Let her Knowledge be ever so *superficial*, her *Pride* will make it look very *considerable* to herself, and she will take it very much amiss, if it doth not meet with proportionable Respect from others: On this Account, I have seldom found (except as before excepted) a Lady of reputed Learning, but she was always troublesome with it; nor could I discover any Purpose it answered, but to increase that natural Impertinence, the Sex (you allow) is too remarkable for already, without this additional Provocative to it: And what is still worse, though it springs from the same Root, as far as my Recollection reaches, I remember but few Instances of a *learned Lady's* being a *good Housewife*.—I allow, *Madam*, that you are a perfect Pattern in this Respect; but I could almost defy you to produce me another: And indeed there is a very natural Account to be given of it: As Vanity is the ruling Passion of the Sex, a Woman pursues that with most Eagerness, which she imagines

gines will be productive of the greatest Stock of Admiration ; and as (I had like to have said) it is impossible for Women to be (what is called) learned without being proud of it, it is no Wonder that other Things should be neglected, in Comparison of *that*, upon which her *whole Soul* is set : Hence 'tis no uncommon Thing to find the *House* and *Table* of one of these *female Philosophers*, in as much *Disorder* and *Dishabillè* as her *Hair* or her *Dress* ; which you know *Ladies* of their Character seldom discover much Concern about.

Upon this Occasion permit me, *Madam*, to speak my Sentiments *freely* ; I know indeed, I am going to touch a very *tender* Point with you ; as it seems to derogate from that *natural Equality* of the *Sexes*, you so fondly contend for, and reduces you something lower than you would willingly be thought to be ; so exact a Judge and Critic in Nature was our great Poet, when he said,

“ —Every Lady would be Queen for Life.

But why should we ever be afraid to speak Truth ? It may sometimes prove offensive, but can never have any ill Consequences upon the whole. Therefore, seriously, *Madam*, when I have employed my Thoughts in the Study of *Nature*, and the real Relations and Dependencies of Things (which, give me Leave to assure you, are oft the Objects of my most delightful Contemplation) I never could bring myself in *earnest* to believe, that your Sex was ever designed for the *Arts* and *Sciences* ; to make *Metaphysicians*, *Mathematicians*, *Politicians*, or *Divines* of ; Nature, if carefully studied, readily discovers her *Meaning* and *Intentions* to *unbiassèd* Observers ; and I have frequently fancied, there is no great Difficulty of coming to the Knowledge of them, in this Case *particularly* ;
and

and that the *Anatomy* of a female Mind as plainly discovers what it was made for, as the *Dissection* of their Bodies;—the particular *Size* of their *Understandings*, the various *Combinations*, *Properties*, *Strength*, and *mutual Relations* of their several *Passions*, being as good a Foundation to form a Judgment on, in one Case; as the *Size*, *Proportion*, and *Strength* of their *Muscles* and *Limbs* are in the other; and as a diligent Enquirer into Nature would, from the *peculiar Softness* and *Tenderness*, and the wonderful *Symmetry*, *Elegance*, and *Delicacy* observable in your *outward Form*, very easily guess, that Nature never intended you for Toil and Labour—to undergo Fatigues and Hardships, and do the mere Drudgery of Life; so, would he apply himself with proper Diligence to the Study of your Minds, I am persuaded, he would soon see, that Nature has fairly excused you from the more *severe* and *laborious Studies*; and that she no more intended to make you *Philosophers*, than to make you *Carters*.—These Thoughts have been long mine, and the more I review and examine them, the more I am convinced of their *Justness* and *Truth*; and I cannot but look upon it as great an *Impropriety*, to see a pretty young Creature demolishing a Pair of *killing Eyes*, in poring over *Locke*, *Newton*, or *Malebranche*, as to view her working at the *Beam*, or holding a *Plough-tail*.—I might easily enlarge here, but my Letter is in Danger of growing too large: Besides, I know this is no pleasing Topic with you; and though I sometimes meet with Instances of this Kind, I am in no Apprehension of its ever becoming a *general Fashion* for *Ladies* to be *learned*: What follows, therefore, shall be only a slight *Sketch*, or *Specimen* of the Manner wherein I am inclined to think Females might be better brought up, and rendered more easy to themselves, more agreeable and useful to others, than they now are.

26 *A Letter to a Lady, &c.*

And now I come, *Madam*, to inform you what I take to be the true *Culture* and *Improvement* of a *Woman's Mind*.

In order to this, it will be proper to represent them in that Relation and State of Being wherein Nature has placed them—That must be first determined, before we can ascertain the Business Nature assigns them, and when we have found out what this Business is, what kind of Improvement a *young Lady* should attend to, follows of Course.

Every Creature is best and most at Ease, in that State which Nature has placed it in: And after the most mature Deliberation, I give it as my Opinion that *Household Business* is your proper Sphere.—Your *Sex* seems peculiarly fitted for what we call *Family Affairs*; and I have oft observed, with what wonderful *Ease* and *Facility*, you get a tolerable Insight into them. There is certainly a great deal, in having the Faculties and the Business proportioned to each other.—It has oft been observed by wise Men, that Nature has formed every one to the acting some particular Part, which he will be sure to succeed in, if he happens to take it; but if he attempts another, 'tis great Odds but he fails; and 'tis no uncommon thing to see Men of no small Parts and Abilities fall short of that *Success* in Affairs, which others of much *lower Characters* very readily attain to.—I have oft thought there was something of this Nature in the Case now under Consideration: The Employment I have here assigned you, seems some how to *lie level* to your Capacities; and if you all did but apply your Minds to it, as I imagine you ought, I scarce think there is one in an Hundred but would make a considerable Figure in it.—Our Sex, notwithstanding all their Skill in *Languages*, *Arts*, and *Sciences*, do not at all seem cut out for this Province; and I dare lay my Life, that a *clever Lass* shall,

shall, with proper Application, make greater Proficiency in it in seven Months, than a *plodding Philosopher* in seven Years : As, on the other Hand, a *tolerable Genius* of our Sex shall lay in more *solid Learning* in that Time, than a common *Petticoat Scholar* shall be able to attain to as long as she lives. — I am therefore for having each Sex keep to their *proper Character and Station*. We were formed for the *rougher and bardier Exercises* of Body and Mind ; with Heads for Contrivance, and Hands for Execution. — You, for the more *soft and tender Offices* of Life, and *gentler Cares and Toils*. — This to me appears to be the Order of Nature ; and I am the more confirmed in it, when I consider, that the Customs of almost all Nations and Countries have, in general, assigned you the same Post I do here. — This shews the *common Sense* of Mankind upon the Head ; and I always think that Nature's Order is the *best regulated, and most beautiful* ; and we make but a vain Attempt, whenever we endeavour to mend her Scheme. Whilst each Sex acts in their proper Sphere, they both appear agreeable : — They have each a Part assigned them, in which they may each excel : And each Part has a *close Relation to, and Connexion with* the other. — If We have Hands or Heads to provide Means to supply the Wants of a Family, by Your *Œconomy* and Management, they must be husbanded to the best Advantage. — Whilst Matters stand thus, all is well ; but if the Lady once takes a Fancy to be learned, or begins to lay Schemes and Projects ; or the Gentleman descends to the Affairs of the Kitchen ; I will be bold to say, that the Contrivance of the one shall never reach higher than a common Intrigue ; and it is well if the other ever makes such Proficiency, as to know how to mix a Pudding.

If then it be allowed, that what we call *Family Business* is your Province, the proper *Culture and*

28 *A Letter to a Lady, &c.*

Improvement of a female Mind, must consist in qualifying herself in the best Manner she is able, for the *Post* here assigned her, *viz.* to act, in a becoming Manner, the Part of a *Wife*, a *Mother*, and *Mistress* of a *House*; which End, whether the present fashionable Way of educating the *Fair*, or your Improvements upon it, are likely to answer, I fancy may be collected from what I have said before; to which I refer you to save the Trouble of repeating it here.

Should you ask me, what *Scheme* I have to propose, which should better answer this Design, than those generally followed; I answer, that might I be allowed to give my Opinion in so *nice* a Case: This should be a Kind of *Abstract* or *Compendium* of it; which indeed, is no more than a few Heads, which I leave those concerned to reflect and inlarge upon, as they see Occasion. I am not here writing a Treatise at large; it is sufficient for me to point out the Way,—to *sketch* out a Design,—let others *fill it up*, who have greater Abilities, more Leisure, and are furnished with a larger Stock of Experience and Observation.

The two *reigning Passions*, which almost ingross the Sex, I take to be *Vanity*, and the *Love of Pleasure*; and from these I think we may date most of their Misfortunes;—the latter doth not discover itself so soon, but the former appears very early in Life, much earlier than is generally suspected: I am therefore for having the *young Lady's* Education begun betimes; and the first Object of my Care should be to guard against the pernicious Effects of this Passion, at whose Door, I am persuaded, a great Share of that Misery, that often attends the *Fair* through Life, may be fairly laid. — Instead of flattering her in it, as is the common Practice, by continual and repeated Commendations; I would use my utmost Endeavours to

A Letter to a Lady, &c. 29

to nip it in the *Bud*, and be sure to mortify her, when I observed her taking Pleasure in hearing herself praised ;—fond Parents little think what infinite Mischief they are laying the Foundation of, when they are constantly *flattering* their Children, and introducing them into such Company, as will gratify their Fondness, in paying the same *little Compliments of Applause* ; and the poor innocent Creature, who feels such extraordinary Joy upon this Occasion, is little apprehensive what a *Viper* she is cherishing in her own Breast, which may one Day prove her Undoing : I am convinced, that no small Proportion of that *Haughtiness* and *Arrogance*—that *Passion* for *Finery* and *Shew*—that *Love* of *public Entertainments*, and that *Aversion* and *Disdain* to the *menial Offices* of her Province, which distinguish the Woman, is but the *natural Product* of that foolish Flattery, which is paid to the Child : And I do not know, whether I should speak very improperly, if I should say, That *many a fine Woman has been ruined, before she was four Years old* : For whilst the harmless Innocent hears herself called by no other Titles, but those of *pretty Miss*, *pretty Dear*, *charming Creature*, *little Angel*, and a Thousand other Names of Indearment and Approbation, both by *Pappa* and *Mamma*, by *Visitors*, and by *Servants* ; which she soon understands the Meaning of ; and observes that every Thing she says, or doth, is liked and applauded ; What can be the Consequence, but that I have assigned above ?

Would you therefore have a Daughter brought up to act a becoming Part in Life, take Care of her *betimes* ; an Error at first Setting out is seldom retrieved : Praise her little yourself ; and let not a Servant *dare* to do it. Let the *little Lady* be accustomed to Disappointments,—Disgraces if she does amiss ; and whatever you do, do not gratify her

her Desire of being admired.—I know this is a Doctrine that will sound harsh in the Ears of most, and a *Mob* of *Objections*, I foresee plainly, will be raised against it: However, I only wish it were considered, that *Praise* is too *strong* for *weak Minds* to bear;—that at the Years I am now speaking of, they are only capable of *little* and *low Action*; scarce of any Thing which must not be abandoned as Years advance; and that therefore to bestow your Applause, upon *such Occasions*, can only serve to fix them in a low and trifling Taste; since (as those Things are best remembered, and longest retained, which happen to us in our early Days) the *Ideas* of these *Commendations* and *Praises* shall be so *strongly connected* in their Minds with *those Actions*, that were the Occasion of them, that probably a strong Desire and Propensity towards *them* will remain with them as long as they live: Thus a young Lady, that is commended for her *fine Dancing*, shall ever after retain a strong Affection for *Balls* and *Assemblies*; another that is commended for a *good Ear in Music*, shall do nothing but sing or play, as long as her Voice, or her Fingers are obedient to her Inclination.—These are only low Examples—the same Reasoning may be extended much farther; but I content myself, as I said, with pointing out the Way; I grant, it is a great Instance of Self-denial, for fond Parents, who are *blessed* with a *pretty forward Child*, to withhold themselves from bestowing those Praises upon it, they apprehend it deserves—to be (as they say) always *snubbing* the *poor Thing*, at the same Time that they are ravished at the Prospect of its *dawning Virtues*.—But, let them reflect, if *ever they expect* to see those *Virtues* in *full Blow*, with the Prospect of which they now entertain themselves with Rapture; they must deny themselves this Pleasure *at present*; and it will be a sufficient Recompence, for all this Self-denial, and also

also for the Pain, their seeming Coldness and Indifference may give the Child, to think, that they hereby consult its truest Interest, and that there will be a Time, e're long (which I shall mention by and by) wherein they may indulge themselves in this Pleasure, with more Reason, with more Satisfaction, and with less Danger.

In the next Place, after she has learned to *read*, which is so necessary a Thing, and so universally taught, that I need only just mention it; I would have her learn to *spell* (a Qualification your Sex is often lamentably deficient in) then to *write a good Hand*; and likewise the *common Rules of Arithmetic* perfectly, so as to be able (if there should be Occasion) to keep a Book with Reputation: This will prove of infinite Advantage, should she be destined to the Lot of a Man of Business; nor will it be of small Service, if she marries a Gentleman. *Algebra* and *Euclid* are but Trifles in Comparison; will only serve to perplex her, or make her impertinent; whereas this will make her useful.—I would have her moreover perfect Mistress of the *Needle*; but at the same Time she qualifies herself to work a *Sampler*, *Petticoat*, or a *Border*, I would have her made to understand, that *plain Work* was of far more Importance; and that her Dexterity at the Needle would be no Commendation, if she could not cut out, and make her own Linnen, and that of the Family.

I am not against what are called the *polite Parts* of a Lady's Education, such as *Music*, *Dancing*, and *the like*; I think they give a becoming *Grace* to all the good Qualities of the Sex: But here, great Caution must be used to keep under the Emotions of Vanity they will necessarily occasion: She should be *fully* and *continually* informed, that these are *Means*, not *Ends*; that they are only intended to set off *those Qualities* that are *really praise-worthy*, and are not in *themselves* of any Value, any farther than they answer
this

this Purpose. And whatever Skill in these lesser Arts she may attain to, I should always, for the Reasons given above, think it dangerous to be lavish of Applause upon the Occasion, but rather, if she is discovered to take too much Pleasure in them, seek some Occasion to mortify her in her favourite Entertainments.

If she shews a Fondness for *Dress* and *fine Cloaths*, she ought *by no Means* to be humoured in it: And, though I am not for *Levelling*, I do not think it improper, that she should rather dress *below her Fortune*, than to the *Extent* of it. Her Attire therefore should be *neat*, but not *gay*; *good*, but *not rich*. I would not have her dress so as to *demean* her *Family*, or her *Friends*; but I should not be ashamed to see a great many of *inferior Rank* outshine her in this Respect.

As the World now goes, it may perhaps be too hard to deny her *a Game at Cards* sometimes, but let her not make it too much a Practice; I know some Ladies, who can scarce pass an Evening without *Whisk* or *Quadrille*; a Custom of very bad Consequence.— You should likewise observe her *Disposition* while she plays, and if upon Winning she discovers any Signs of an *extravagant Joy*, or *repines* and *loses her Temper* upon Losing; in a Word, if she plays with any *Anxiety* or *Concern*, it is better to forbid her the Use of them: For, when this is the Case, it oft raises such *savage Passions* in the Breasts of the *Fair*, as makes them resemble *Furies* more, than that *soft and tender Sex* they belong to, and which, by being oft excited upon these Occasions, gather Strength and settle into a firm and fixed Disposition of Mind: But, *above all*, never suffer her to hazard much at this Diversion: There are many Instances of *whole Families undone* by female Gamesters, and the dreadful Effects it has upon the Mind, will moreover increase in Proportion to the *Value* of the Sum she ventures.

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Take all the Care imaginable to keep her from reading *Plays* and *Romances* : It is surprising what Havock these have made among the Sex, when they have been suffered, either through Carelessness or Want of Attention to the *ill Consequences*, to divert themselves with this *pretty Reading*, as they call it: I almost tremble at the Thoughts of the Danger ; and yet the Practice is so common, that it requires the utmost Assiduity to prevent it : Their own *Companions* are ready always to put such Things into their Hands ; and if you should be so happy as to guard against these, you have *other Enemies* to deal with still ; your *Maids*, whom you little suspect, will often gratify *Miss* in this Way ; and if they cannot get *Books* to entertain her, they will do it to the best of their Power, in giving her the *History* of their *own Amours*, and of all the *Love-Adventures*, both in *Town* and *Country*, *ancient* and *modern*, they have ever *known*, or ever *heard of* ; and will upon Occasion convey a *Book* or a *Letter* from one of the *other Sex*, in Order to introduce the young Lady into the pleasing Scene, they have before dressed up to her with all their Art : I perhaps may be thought too severe, but upon this Account I do not know but it might be proper now and then to search *Miss's* Room, and, if it can be done *privately*, her Pockets too, to see that no such dangerous Favourites lie concealed there: I would never give her Room to *think* she was *suspected*, but I would not *spare* her, if I once made a *Discovery* : Such Things should not be so much as mentioned, till you found her guilty, but then she should be made thoroughly acquainted with their pernicious Tendency.— And as to the *Maids*, by all Means make them know their Distance.— They do more Mischief than is easily conceived ; and therefore I think it might not be amiss, upon this Occasion, to rouse our young Lady's natural Pride, and make her sensible how much *below* her it is, to keep Company and hold familiar Conversation with those, who are so much below her : But

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then this should be done *before* they have much *practised on her* in this Way; if she has once *lent an Ear* to the pleasing Stories they tell her, it will be all too late, and she will find Ways and Means, in Spite of all your Precaution, to keep up the Correspondence.

As soon as ever she arrives at a proper Age, she should be made acquainted with the *Business of the House*, and not only see it done, but bear a Part in the doing of it: Notwithstanding our present Set of young Females seem quite above such low Work, and must not spoil their Hands or their Cloaths in this *vile Drudgery*; it is no Disgrace to a Lady to be thus employed, it is (I think) much to her Honour.—She should early be made acquainted with the *Circumstances* of the Family, and what *Expences* they will allow; Nothing should be bought into the House, without her having a Concern in it; and she should keep an *exact Account* of what is laid out.—She should be well acquainted with the Prices of *Goods and Furniture, Cloth, Linnen, Silks, Bedding*, and all *Family Utensils*:—Should visit the *Kitchen*, and know how to deal with the *Butcher, Baker, Market-woman, &c.* By these Means she will soon learn how to lay out her Money to Advantage. The *Table and Bed-Linnen* should either be of her own getting up, or at least she should have a first Hand in the making; and the *wearing Linnen* of the Family, in a great Measure, should be her own Work.—She should likewise be well instructed in the Art of Cookery, nor disdain sometimes to exercise it herself.—

I need not be told that this will probably seem very *hard Service* to a *gay sprightly Girl*, and that she will be apt to complain, that she has not the same Liberties and Indulgences as her Neighbours: But then this may be ballanced another Way: If you have not spoiled her before by your too *early Indulgence*, and *Commendations*, now is the Time to ply them to Advantage; and if she has not already been *surfeited* with
Praise,

Praise, let her, as I may say, first begin to taste of it, by your applauding her Skill in the Articles before referred to. Whenever she makes a judicious and advantageous Bargain, let it not pass uncommended.—When she lays out her Money to Advantage, declare the *high Sense* you have of her *Prudence*; when she is employed in any of the *menial Offices* of the House, let her know how much this Behaviour *recommends her to you*; and do not be wanting, in pointing out the Advantage it will be of, when she comes to engage in the Affairs of Life, *upon her own Bottom*.—By these Means, you will *sweeten* the Task you impose upon her, and she will feel such a *sensible Pleasure* in having such ample Testimonies of your Approbation, which she has long wished for, but never before so fully enjoyed, that she will undergo it, not only with *Chearfulness*, but *Joy*.—And you will find scarce any Thing, she will not readily perform, if she is sure to merit your Favour by it: Hereby you may lead her into what (I should call) a *true Taste of Life*, and make her *value* herself *chiefly*, upon those Things, which are of some *Importance* in it: And as there cannot be too many Motives to engage her to contract an Affection for this Way of employing herself, I cannot think it improper, that she should sometimes be reminded, that by laying out her Time in this Manner, she takes the *surest Way* to recommend herself to a Man of *Sense* and *Worth*.—When she is advanced to a certain Age, it is impossible but her Thoughts will sometimes terminate upon our Sex; and I own, I cannot help thinking, that, now and then hinting, that this was the best Way to qualify her to become the Station of a *Mistress of a Family*, and, that with the greater *Diligence* she applied herself, so much *sooner* would she be capable of discharging that important Post; would probably have a considerable Influence, and make her go through

the Fatigues of her Station with less Repining and Uneasiness, whilst she lives in the Hopes of being rewarded at last, with the *Love* and *Affection* of a deserving Youth, who, for *these very Qualifications*, will prefer her to the whole Herd of *thoughtless, gay Creatures*, whose Condition she may otherwise be too apt to envy.—

And while you are talking with her upon this Head, you have a fine Opportunity of inspiring her with a just *Contempt* of *Coxcombs*, and *Scorn of Fools*, and recommending those Persons to her Approbation, who are most deserving of it. Admiration is a Passion, I have always observed to be strong in your Sex; and there is no small Danger arising from it, as it not seldom exposes them to be a Prey to the most *worthless* and *insignificant* of Mortals. What Destruction has sometimes been wrought, by the *Cut* of a *Coat*, or the *Cock* of a *Hat*? And what strange Emotions have been raised in *pretty Bosoms*, upon the Sight of a *smart Perriwig*, or a *laced Waistcoat*? Therefore, as you *value her Happiness*, let the *Fair* be taught to *despise* these *outward Trappings* and *Ornaments*:— To laugh at a *Fool*, though laden with Gold and Magnificence; and make *Sport* with a *Fop*, though furnished with all the Accomplishments his *Dancing-Master*, *Taylor*, or *Milliner* can afford him. I could easily enlarge upon these Heads, but I only hint at Things.

There is another Thing I shall beg Leave to mention, which is, that Miss may never be allowed to *keep late Hours*, or *sit up at Nights*; I know no Business that ought to keep her up past *Ten* or *Eleven o' Clock*; except, now and then, Company, or something extraordinary happens.—This may sometimes prevent *Misfortunes*, and will undoubtedly contribute to *her Health*.— Besides, I have another Reason, which is, that when she once has used herself to this bad Habit (not the better for being common)

mon) she will find it difficult to leave it off; and so, when she comes to be her *own Mistress*, it is probable, a considerable Part of the Day will be spent in Bed, and her proper *Care and Charge* all that While neglected. I could name *several* who sit up until *Two or Three* in the *Morning*, and leave their *Family* and *Affairs* till Noon, at the Discretion of the Servants.

I would not have *Miss* kept *constantly at Home*; she should be permitted to *visit* and *see Company*: This will teach her how to behave herself; but you must be always careful *what Company* you let her keep; particularly do not suffer her to herd too much with *her Equals*: Such *young Friendships* are seldom productive of much Good; though sometimes, perhaps, she may meet with an *Acquaintance among them* that may be of Service, but as the World goes, the *Hazard* is considerable.—It is a *common Practice*, I know, to send *young Ladies* to spend a *Summer*, or a *Winter*, at a Friend's House at a Distance, to wean them from Home, and wear off all *childish* and *rustic Airs*; it is not a *bad Custom*, only I think you should well weigh the *Characters* of the Families, where you trust so important a Charge, and be *fully satisfied* of their concurring with, and assisting you in, *this Method* of Education: otherwise, it is great Odds, but they will undo more in a Month, than you will be able to repair in a Year.

I have hinted before, that *Miss* should not be suffered to be *too familiar* with the *Servants*; I would here guard against a contrary Extreme: Teach her to behave with a becoming *Civility* to them: Tho' th Method I have proposed necessarily subjects the Servants to her Command, let her not, upon this Account, assume any *haughty* or *imperious Airs*, be suffered to give *arbitrary Orders*, or to *tyrannize* with the *Power* she is intrusted with.

I know,

I know, you will be for asking what Books I would recommend ; from what I have said above, you will readily see, that I am not for having *her puzzle her Brains* with any *Systems*, either of *Divinity*, *Ethics*, or *Philosophy*, or trouble her Head with more Languages than her own.—I would have her kept from every Thing that is *abstruse*, which would only prove *Fuel* to her *Vanity*, but yield no *Light* to her *Understanding* : What Time she has for Reading, I would have employed upon such Books, that are most remarkable for *Delicacy of Sentiment*, and *Elegance of Style*,—which convey *right Notions* of *human Life* and *Happiness*, in the most *easy* and *pleasing Manner*, and paint the *Charms of Virtue* in the most *amiable Light* ; in a Word, which answer to the Poet's Character ;* and at the same Time both please and instruct. I am afraid the Number of these is not so great as might be wished ; some I know there are, and were I disposed to recommend particular Writers, I might mention Mr. *Addison's Works*, some of Mr. *Pope's*, &c. And *above all*, our *admirable Dr. Tillotson* ; but it is sufficient for me to lay down general Rules : However, while I am upon this Topic, permit me to give one Caution, *viz.* never let her read Controversy ; there is nothing tends to *sour* the Mind more ; *especially religious Controversies*, which are generally the *worst-natured* of all ; nor do I apprehend, there is any Need for her to be *grounded* and *settled* in the *Faith* this Way.—Your Sex is naturally far from being disposed to *Irreligion* ;—that is a *Vice* almost *peculiar* to ours, and seems entirely founded upon a *high*, but *false Notion* of *Courage*, which disposes them to be *Atheists* and *Infidels*, just in the same Manner, as it drives them to the *heroical Exploits* of *breaking of Windows*, or *beating up a Wench's Quarters* : But as it is no Disgrace for *Females* to be *Cowards*, there is little Danger of their ever turning *Free-thinkers* ; it is true,

* ——— *delectando pariterque monendo.* HOR.

there

there may be some Exceptions to this: However, she is infinitely more likely to become a *Bigot* or an *Enthusiast* by reading such Writings, than *prophane* by neglecting them; and your Sex, when they once turn *Bigots*, prove generally the most *fierce and untractable* of all *Bigots*.

For the same Reason, I would never have her meddle with Politics, nor have the Name of *Party* so much as mentioned in her Hearing: Nothing sits more *ungraceful* on a *Woman*, than these little *Distinctions* and *Peculiarities*; and it has often given me great Concern to see a *pretty Bosom heaving and swelling*, with all the Emotions of *Party Rage*; or a *beautiful Set of Features* intirely *disconcerted* by a Storm of *religious Zeal*.

But what I should recommend as of the *utmost Importance*, is, that her *Temper* may be *formed* in such a Manner, as *becomes* her Sex; that her *Heart* be fashioned to *Humanity*, *Complaisance*, *Softness*, *Compassion*, and all *those Qualities* that *adorn* the *Woman*: See to it, that she be *humble, modest, and discreet*: an *assuming, bold, and forward Behaviour* in a *Female*, is the most *unnatural* and *shocking* Thing imaginable; it looks very ill in a *Man*; in a *Woman*, it is quite monstrous, and I scarce know any Treatment too bad for such *Bullies* in *Petticoats*: Let her be made sensible of the *Odiousness* of such a *Temper* and *Carriage*; and inculcate in the strongest Manner you are able, that

“ Good Nature is the brightest Ornament
“ Of Womankind.—It will kindle soft Desire,
“ When Fortune, Features, Birth, and Wit shall fail.

On the other Hand, a *low, fawning, servile Complaisance*, and a *Desire to please*, carried beyond all Bounds and Reason, looks equally contemptible, and is generally troublesome; and *disobliges* by the very *Endeavour to oblige*.

Happy

Happy the *Fair*, that can keep clear of these Extremes, and support an *affable, well-natured, obliging, modest Character*, with proper *Dignity and Spirit*, without being over-run with *Pride and Affectation*, or sinking into *Folly and Meanness*.

But I perceive my Letter grows too long, and therefore (though I pass by many Things, I once thought to have touched upon) I shall stop my Hand here: If you should desire it, I may *hereafter* resume the Subject; in the mean Time, I beg Leave to assure you, that I am,

Madam,

Your most Obedient,

Humble Servant.

F I N I S.



